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2022-23 Academic Year

Disability Policy

LSME is committed to the principles of inclusion and equal opportunities. The College acknowledges that disabled people face barriers in accessing physical environments. Our duty to disabled people is defined under the Equality Act (2010). This act defines disability and also states the need for HE institutions to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students. It also falls within the Quality Assurance Agency's *Quality Code*. Expectations for Quality: Enabling student development and achievement.

This policy is based on the principle that all students should be able to access the support they need to ensure that they can demonstrate their full academic potential at higher education level, through appropriate academic achievement. LSME aims to ensure that all students including disabled students should arrive at our campus confident that any barriers to their learning have been identified, understood and appropriate steps taken to reduce their impact. We ensure that our learning environment is as inclusive as possible and we engage in a continual improvement cycle that develops inclusive practice. We ensure that all students are aware of the funding available through Disabled Students Allowance underpinned by an inclusive environment, and individual reasonable adjustments where required. This policy sets out how LSME fulfils its commitment in the challenge of tackling the potential exclusion of disabled applicants for student and staff positions.

Definitions

1. Disability: according to the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Some disabilities may be progressive or long term, while others may be temporary. Substantial' is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would complete a daily task like getting dressed. 'Long-term' means 12 months or more, e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection.
2. A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments which can be:
 - sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing;
 - impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, myalgic encephalitis (ME), chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), fibromyalgia, depression and epilepsy;
 - progressive, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, cancer, HIV infection or
 - multiple sclerosis (MS) and forms of dementia;
 - auto-immune conditions such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE);
 - organ-specific, including respiratory conditions, such as asthma, and cardiovascular diseases, including thrombosis, stroke and heart disease;
 - developmental, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), dyslexia and dyspraxia;
 - learning disabilities;
 - mental health conditions with symptoms such as anxiety, low mood, panic attacks, phobias, or unshared perceptions; eating disorders; bipolar affective disorders; obsessive-compulsive disorders; personality disorders; post-traumatic stress disorder, and some self-harming behaviour;
 - mental illnesses, such as depression and schizophrenia; • produced by injury to the body, including to the brain.
3. Learning difficulty: means that the person has significantly greater difficulty in learning than most people of the same age.
4. Dyslexia: difficulty in reading or normal comprehension despite adequate intelligence. "A combination of abilities and difficulties which affect the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling and writing. Accompanying weaknesses may be identified in areas of speed of processing, short-term memory, sequencing, auditory and/or visual perception, spoken language and motor skills. (British Dyslexia Association, 2001)

Individuals with dyslexia vary in the nature and severity of their difficulties, and in the strategies, they have developed to accommodate those difficulties. Some may have processing difficulties that may be affected by their environment and self-esteem. These students may also vary in terms of their emotional response to their problem and have never been assessed for dyslexia.

This can mean that other people are unaware of the extent of their difficulties. They may put in a lot of effort to overcome their difficulties and demonstrate achievement, but because they have never been assessed, they have little idea about the nature of their difficulties but are struggling in a situation that is stretching their literacy and organisational skills beyond previous experience. These students may produce written assignments that do not truly reflect the student's abilities or the nature of their problems. Their work may be well presented and may be seen as evidence that the student does not require support. On the other hand, work that has many errors and inconsistencies may appear careless or rushed when, in reality, it is the best of several drafts.

Writing is only one aspect of the range of difficulties reported by students; however, listening and taking notes in a lecture may be very difficult. They may also have limitations in working memory, resulting in the need to go over texts many times to remember and understand them. Their handwriting may be extremely slow, lacking automaticity, which contributes to spelling errors and/or word omissions. They may struggle with the pronunciation of polysyllabic and/or unfamiliar words and have a slow speed of reading; word omissions, problems making sense of print without substantial re-reading with difficulties in reading aloud.

These students may also have a tendency to misinterpret or miscopy complex written or spoken instructions with word recall difficulties (spoken and written); often giving the appearance of immature language in relation to the complexity of ideas; they may have a left/right confusion leading to orientation difficulties, and they may also have some chronic fatigue as a result of the extra concentration and energy needed to meet both the literacy and non-literary requirements of HE.

Principles

LSME will ensure that in all policies, procedures, functions and activities, consideration is given to the means of enabling disabled students and staff full participation in all aspects of the academic and social life of the institution. The LSME Public Information on programme details and general information will be accessible to people with disabilities.

A rolling programme of adjustments will be established to make existing buildings accessible, based on priorities outlined in current access audits and financial resources.

LSME staff will work in partnership with the Disability & Dyslexia Support Services alongside disabled students to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made, enabling disabled students to meet their full academic potential.

The College will ensure that the requirements of disabled students are considered during programme validation and review and that appropriate amendments are made.

Programme specifications that raise barriers to access by disabled people will be reconsidered and reasonable adjustments made to minimise such barriers.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors and the Academic Board to promote equality and diversity throughout the institution and for Programme Leaders and Administration personnel to enforce these principles in their departments and to ensure that the policy and legal framework are communicated and implemented effectively.

Students are responsible for requesting any review of implemented reasonable adjustments if such adjustments are not proving to be effective in meeting their entitlements.

Disability Disclosure Policy and Procedures for Implementing Them

All applicants for student and staff positions at the College will be encouraged to disclose disabilities before admission. The decision of whether or not to disclose a disability and the timing of any disclosure belongs entirely to the individual student. However, if opportunities have been given to disclose a disability, and an individual decides not to, then the College will not be able to offer them individual support or adjustments.

Disclosure will not prejudice the application and details of how the College will follow-up disclosed disability needs will be discussed with the applicant.

All information disclosed will be treated as confidential. LSME will manage the process of information sharing and will treat all personal data as per the Data Protection Act 2018. Access to disability-related information will be provided on a need to know basis only, for reasonable adjustments to be implemented.

Information about additional support services will be made available, and additional costs associated with support outside the scope of the college will be made transparent.

1. Where the college cannot meet the needs of an applicant, it will refer student applicants to other colleges that may be able to meet their disability needs. This will be at no cost.
2. The College's Disability Strategy will follow established and recommended good practices by organisations such as the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) and The Council for International Education (UKCOSA).
3. The College will consider wider issues such as:

a) Encouraging applications from disabled persons

b) Ensure that staff involved in the recruitment of students are aware of any disclosed disabilities and where to refer students for more detailed information.

c) Acknowledging the fact that not all dyslexia cases have been diagnosed and this becomes the responsibility of academic staff to advise students who are experiencing academic difficulties to be assessed professionally if they suspect they may be dyslexia.

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Where the disability is of a nature that the student/staff could not function normally with the facilities at the college, records will be kept as to how continuing and changing needs are met and to what extent special provisions are to be made including reasonable adjustments and special considerations by awarding bodies. Students who develop progressive and disabling conditions while studying with us will be encouraged to stay on the course and achieve their qualifications. Reasonable adjustments made will be reviewed and monitored periodically to ensure the support is still relevant and effective. Additional information on some of the adjustments deemed reasonable, and special consideration arrangements will be found in our Learning Support Policy.

Reasonable adjustments for staff might include the following:

- Making adjustments to the work environment (including, where necessary, the provision of special equipment);
- Assigning a disabled person to a suitable location of work;
- Allocating minor duties of the person with disabilities to another member of staff;
- Redeployment to a suitable alternative post if no reasonable adjustment to current working arrangements is possible. This may involve retraining the staff member.

- Altering the individual's working hours (e.g. allowing them to travel flexible hours to accommodate transport arrangements, or changing their hours to fit with the availability of a carer);
- Allowing the person, a reasonable amount of time off for remedial therapy and assessment etc. in connection with their disability;
- Training the individual to use special equipment;
- Modifying selection tests (e.g. providing an oral rather than a written test to a person with restricted manual dexterity).

Reasonable adjustments for disabled students may involve:

- Changing usual assessment arrangements or methods
- Adapting assessment materials
- Reorganising physical environment
- Using assistive technology (including handheld recorders for dyslexic students)
- Allowing extra time, e.g. assignment extensions or arranging extended individual learner support for study skills for dyslexic students

- Using readers, scribes, transcribers, and prompters if necessary
- Use of assistive software for students with dyslexia
- Presenting assessment materials in a large format

Access to the Built Environment

Our premises are fitted with an elevator and disabled washrooms to allow access to students with limited mobility. We also ensure that health and safety procedures are inclusive.

Student Welfare and Pastoral Care Support for Disabled Learners

Our Welfare Officer is made available to all learners (including the disabled learners) for matters deemed appropriate. In the event where a teacher suspects any form of hidden disabilities such as dyslexia, the student will be referred to their GP, who will arrange for a formal assessment. Once diagnosed, a special report will be sent to LSME from the GP on the nature of reasonable adjustment to their teaching, learning and assessment process. The Welfare Officer should be made aware of the case to enable effective follow-up.

Our complaint policy and procedure will also deal with any allegations of non-compliance of LSME's legal obligations.

Disabled Students Allowance

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) are a Government grant available to eligible disabled students on higher education courses in the UK, to help with extra course costs they may incur by attending their course, as a direct result of their disability. The allowances can help to pay for a non-medical personal helper, items of specialist equipment, assistive software, travel and other course-related costs. The allowance is neither means-tested nor repayable. DSAs are not available to all students but are subject to eligibility criteria, which are stated on the "gov.uk" website, together with the amounts payable at <https://www.gov.uk/disabledstudents-allowances-dsas/overview>.

Although a disabled student may be offered a place at LSME, the offer is not a guarantee of eligibility to receive DSAs. Where possible inclusive practices will make individual support unnecessary.

LSME Bursary Scheme for disabled students

Where barriers resulting from disability remain even after reasonable adjustment, the student may be offered some financial support from our LSME Bursary scheme. This financial support can be used to supplement the cost of travel and for the purchase of appropriate software to enable the learner to engage fully with the learning process.

Responsibilities

The admission team is to encourage all prospective students to disclose any disabilities during the application process, explaining the importance of disclosure and additional support offered. Encourage students who declare disabilities to include the supporting medical certificates suggesting the adjustments required.

Lecturers

Lecturers administering the diagnostic test should allow more time to prospective students with disabilities. Lecturers should also encourage students who become disabled during their study to disclose the information to LSME. Lecturers provide additional learning support and apply all reasonable adjustments in assessments.

Senior Management

Senior Management is to ensure continuous monitoring and review of this policy. Make financial resources available for all reasonable adjustments. Equal opportunities monitoring will also offer learners another opportunity to disclose any disabilities that occurred during their study.

External Support for Disabled Students

Home students are often eligible for a Disabled Students' Allowance, which provides funding for the above support. The Disabled Students' Allowance is provided by Student Finance England (SFE). For further information, visit <https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/products/full-time-undergraduate-education/full-time-disabled-students-allowances/>



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